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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

APRIL 3, 1978

CHERRY BLOSSOM TIME

---IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Japanese flowering cherry trees--now world famous--were imported from Japan in 1912 to mark the living symbol of friendship between the peoples of Japan and the United States. The story behind these plantings of more than 3,000 trees began when David Fairchild, a Washington, D.C., area resident, became interested in the flowering cherries after a visit to Japan in 1905.

Beautification efforts for the Capitol city in those days included planting trees and shrubs to cover the unsightly swamp bordering the Potomac River. Fairchild had successfully planted cherry trees on a hillside he owned in Maryland, which had inspired others to marvel at the beauty of the flowering cherry tree, or "Sakura," as it is called by the Japanese.

Eventually the idea of beautifying the river area was suggested to Mrs. William Howard Taft, whose enthusiasm spurred diplomatic interest in both Japan and the United States. A donation of 3,000 cherry trees was made by the people of Japan in 1912 as a gesture of continuing friendship between the two countries.

Ninety-nine percent of the trees planted around the Tidal Basin were well-established four years later, some even 8 to 12 feet tall, and blooming each spring. In 1935, the first "Cherry Blossom Festival" was staged in Washington with many civic groups participating in what was to become an annual event of international significance.



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In 1954, the Japanese ambassador to the United States presented to Washington an ancient 20-ton ceremonial Japanese stone lantern, which is lighted as Friendship's Flame during the opening of the Cherry Blossom Festival. The presentation marked the 100th anniversary of the first treaty between the United States and Japan March 31, 1854.

In 1965, the Japanese government made another gift of 3,900 Japanese cherry trees to Washington. Cherry trees originally planted around the Tidal Basin in 1912 are now dying of old age. Only about 28 percent of the trees originally planted are living. The National Arboretum, as part of the USDA's continued interest in these trees, is in the process of preserving some of them.

Single copies of "The Japanese Flowering Cherry Trees of Washington, D.C.," may be obtained free while they last, by writing to the Publications Division, GPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

FOOD CLIPS

Food in a freezer that has been improperly wrapped may develop small, white dehydrated areas called "freezer burn," according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists. This condition is harmless, but if extensive, can cause food to become tough or lose flavor.

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The space between the top of food in a container and the container lid or closure is called the "headspace."

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Bacteria capable of growing without air are called anerobes.

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Blanching is a term used in home canning. It means heating vegetables by immersion in boiling water, steaming, sauteing, or stewing to inactivate enzymes capable of causing quality changes in foods during freezer storage.

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Since few bacteria thrive in acids, their destruction is easier in fruits than in vegetables (with the exception of tomatoes).

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Packing materials for freezing foods should be chosen carefully. Moisture-vapor proof materials such as glass, rigid plastic, and metal freezer containers are recommended.

ABOUT

YOU

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ME

A new consumer writer Mary Hair, has joined Detroit (Mich.) Free Press. A former Associated Press general reporter, she will conduct testing panels and write about buying habits.. Mary Flachsenhaar, formerly with the Middletown (N.Y.) Record, moved from the features and women's page section into the food department of the Detroit Free Press.. Aileen Paul, writer of children's books, continues her writing from a new home in Sante Fe, N.M., when she is not in New York. Aileen's new book, "Kids' Outdoor Gardening," follows "Kids' Gardening" and "A First Indoor Gardening Book for Children"..... Steve Isaacs, son of the late Dorothy (Ritz) Isaacs, who wrote the Household Hints syndicated column for many years, and Norman Isaacs, retired ex-editor of the Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal, (now director of the National News Council), has been named editor of the Minneapolis (Minn.) Star. He is the director of the L.A. Times-Washington Post News Service. Steve's sister, Roberta Matthews, is continuing their late mother's popular column from Washington, D.C., where Roberta is a law student.... The annual National Food Editors Conference will be held Oct. 8-13 at the Biltmore in Los Angeles (Calif.).. A new consumer oriented magazine, Common Cents, will become a part of the Beaver County (Pa.) Times (daily) in April with their new Sunday paper. Saturday edition will be dropped... Mary Neiswinder of the Long Beach (Calif.) Independent, Press-Telegram won the top news award from the Pacific Coast Press Club... Editor Ann Faragher, past president of the Texas Press Women, will head the Greenville, Texas, Herald-Banner's new readership survey committee.